

## Importance of fruits in human health and nutritional security

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### Introduction

Globally, there were 809.9 million undernourished people, of which 194.4 million people (24 %) were in India in 2016-18. Nutrition security is achieved “when all people at all times consume food of sufficient quantity and quality in terms of variety, diversity, nutrient content and safety to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, coupled with a sanitary environment, adequate health, education and care” (FAO, 2012). The lack of ability to access a minimum nutrition requirement, expressed in terms of daily energy intake in calories terms, has serious implications for human development. Malnutrition as a term is used by nutritionists to describe all kinds of nutritional deficiencies. It arises due to food insecurity caused by deficiency, excess or imbalance in the intake of micro/macro-nutrients in one’s diet. In India, food security has always been associated with food grain security. However, while adequacy of grain can ensure that dietary energy requirements are met, diet diversity is important to meet nutrient requirements.

### Crop Diversification

The world population depends for its basic diet of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins on a very limited cereal crops. However, the increasing demand of food with better nutrition cannot fulfill by only major grain and pulse crops. The availability of long-term food and nutritional security can be achieved with an enhanced local productivity and yield stability strategy that fully embraces the benefits of both between and within-crop diversification. As well as the greater use of fruit crops.



potential for agricultural diversification which are often richer in micronutrients and fiber than staple crops. Better utilization of fruit crops and some underutilized fruit species like pilu, paniyal, cactus pear etc. in diversified cropping systems can be an important first step toward secure food provision in times of uncertainty. Such local crops can provide valuable nutrients as part of a healthier diet and can be processed into other products. Avocado contains not more than 1% sugar and it recommended as high energy food for diabetes patient. The increased consumption of fruits can positively influence nutrition status as well human productivity. So the adoption of fruit crops, for agricultural diversification can be part of the solution to providing food, health and nutritional security. The changing consumption pattern towards a nutrient rich diet is likely to have positive effect on health and nutritional outcomes.

